



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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***GOV. NAPOLITANO SIGNS AGREEMENT
TO PUT NATIONAL GUARD ON BORDER
Memorandum of Agreement Begins "Operation Jump Start"***

PHOENIX – Governor Janet Napolitano today signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that will allow deployment of National Guard personnel to the U.S.-Mexico border as part of "Operation Jump Start," President Bush's plan for securing the international border.

In conjunction with signing of the MOA, the Governor also ordered 300 Arizona troops to begin their part of the border mission by June 15th. The cost of all Guard units – from Arizona and from other states – will be covered by the federal government under the terms of Article 32 of the U.S. Code. Article 32 allows the Guard to remain under the command of state governors, but their activities are paid for by the federal budget.

"We're finally moving in the right direction," said Gov. Napolitano. "Since last December, I have been asking the federal government to take this action. The White House is with us, and we will finally get some much-needed support at the border."

Gov. Napolitano wrote to Dept. of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld late last year, asking for funding to place Arizona National Guard soldiers at the border to take on some support duties. National Guard troops deployed in Arizona will not replace border patrol, and ***will not be used as primary law enforcement***. The goal has been, and continues to be, to use Guard members in a strictly support role to Border Patrol. Relieving Border Patrol of its non-law-enforcement workload will free up the time of BP officers; they, in turn, will be able to focus the extra time on enforcement of federal immigration law.

To put it very simply: Guard missions are expected to focus on very specific duties in a support capacity only. Soldiers are not being deployed to militarize the border, nor will they assume the duties of Border Patrol.

There will be two kinds of deployments under Operation Jump Start. One involves units assigned to border states as part of their annual two-week training period. The other involves individual Guard members on what is referred to "durational" deployment, which can extend over a period of weeks or months.

ADD TWO

The President's plan, supported by Governor Napolitano, calls for the following to occur over a two-year period:

- The federal government will hire and train a total of 6,000 new Border Patrol Agents.
- While those agents are being hired and trained, National Guard troops will act in a non-law-enforcement support role, in border states including Arizona.
- Over time, as the number of Border Patrol agents increases, the number of Guard troops on border duty will decline.

The ultimate goal is to increase the overall strength of the Border Patrol. The Guard supports the work of meeting that goal.

Copies of the MOA are attached in PDF format.